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VOLUME I ISSUE III

JANUARY 2014

Deployment Update

Well we are officially over the halfway mark—that's definitely something to cheer about. Wow! 2013 has gone by in a blink of an eye. When you reflect on 2013, what is your fondest memory? How well did you do last year with your resolutions and goals? With 2014 already here, now is the time to set your goals and timelines to achieve them. But first, let's recap our time here aboard Boxer in 2013. In June, we began predeployment training and participated in *Dawn Blitz*, a two-week exercise, requiring vigorous preparation to help our Navy/Marine Corps team by increasing our core amphibious capabilities while strengthening our international partnerships and PHIBRON-MEU Integration. This allowed us to work with our Marine counterparts to begin forming the "blue-green" team for deployment. In July, we participated in Composite Training Unit Exercise, a required certification that helped us integrate the ships of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and test our

multiple capabilities. In August, we participated in a Certification Exercise, which further increased our joint Navy-Marine Corps team preparedness. It was our last exercise before sailing off for deployment. In September, one of the highlights was the Chief Petty Officer pinning ceremony in the hangar bay. We also visited Subic Bay, Philippines for our first port visit. In October, we visited Singapore for our second port visit and celebrated the 238th U.S. Navy birthday. We also received a treat from the band *Xperimento*, with a

concert on the flight deck. In November, we visited Salalah, Oman, celebrated the U.S. Marine Corps 237th birthday and had a special visit from the Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Mike Stevens. In December, we visited Dubai, United Arab Emirates, spending Christmas at sea. We then rang in the New Year with a lighted ball drop. What will 2014 bring? We will surely have many more fun-filled memories to share with our families. 🇺🇸



Photo by MC3 Mayra Knight

Sailors ringing in the New Year at the Ball drop celebration!

Behind the White Elephant gift exchange



The Rules. All gifts should cost around \$10.00. The number of gifts must match the number of people participating. Operations Specialist 1st Class Nikita Barnes and Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Schuyler Wilson coordinated the event using pre-picked numbers to determine the gift opening order. Lastly, the maximum amount of times a gift could be stolen was two times.


The White Elephant gift exchange won over to Secret Santa for the CPR1 command event.

"I originally wanted to do the "Secret Santa" idea for the holidays, but instead I took two ideas to the Deputy and the one he choose was "The White Elephant," said Barnes.

At first she was reluctant, but Barnes quickly warmed up to the idea of the exchange and had a lot

of fun. "I guess my idea of someone taking a gift from me that I opened didn't really appeal to me," said Barnes. "That's the main reason why I've never played this game before, but it was really fun, and I'm looking forward to next year's."

Barnes said the hottest gifts were an iTunes gift card, a remote control toy helicopter, a pair of wireless headphones, and a souvenir Dubai plate. About 44 staff members played the friendly exchange, and it was a morale booster for the crew.

"Everyone really had a good time," said Barnes. "The Commodore and Deputy were really onboard with this event and it felt like family fun, you know something you do with your family and close friends. I'm glad it was a big hit." 



Photos by MC3 J. Michael Schwartz

New Year's with Operations Specialist Armando Franco

What does the New Year mean to you?

It is a day to be thankful that I have survived another year in this world. I have someone to love and someone who loves me, even though they may be very far at this present time.

Did you make a New Year's resolution?

I choose not to make one because statistics have shown that most people's resolutions get broken within a month of them being made. A person shouldn't need New Year's event to change something in their lives. As Nike's slogan says, "Just do it."

What are your hope for 2014?

The first thing that comes to mind is getting back home safely and into the arms of my loved ones. Also, I want to make board for chief. We shall see how it plays out when the results come out. Last but not least, after a disappointing season, but still better than the Giants, I hope for a great year for my DALLAS COWBOYS!! THAT IS ALL!!

Blazing the trail with Chief Operations Specialist

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Brian Vugteveen

How did you get the idea to reenlist in an Osprey, and why did you decide to do it?

I had never been in an Osprey before. I thought it would be a good idea to get the division together and get off the ship. To spend some time together as a division and do something we don't get to do every day.

How did it make you feel to have your coworkers and friends present for your reenlistment?

It was nice to have the support of the department present. It really helped with divisional camaraderie.

Have you reenlisted in any other interesting locations?

My first reenlistment was at the USS Arizona Memorial. Those of us reenlisting had the ability to purchase and fly our own flag over the memorial.

What are your future plans for your Navy career?

To complete this amazing 2013/2014 deployment and to do good things at Afloat Training Group San Diego.

What are some of the biggest highlights in your career so far?

The opportunity to have been stationed on a frigate, destroyer, cruiser, and an amphibious platform. The ability to be stationed around the world and to live in Japan. I also got to teach the Theater Battle Management Core System while stationed in San Diego.



Lt. Charles Bonafilia, left, administers the enlistment oath to OSC Brian Vugteveen during his reenlistment in an MV-22 Osprey.

Congratulations to the Senior Sailor/Junior Sailor of the Quarter



IS1 Jason Medaris



OS2 Bryan Sandoval

Photos by MCSN Veronica Mammia

Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Jason Medaris joined the Navy 14 years ago. His proudest Navy moment was receiving a Bravo Zulu as President of the Commander, Naval Forces Europe-Commander, Naval Forces Africa-Commander, Sixth Fleet First Class Petty Officer Association (FCPOA) from retired Force Master Chief LeVault for developing one of the closest knit and most successful associations he'd ever seen.

He offers these words of wisdom: "Be an active member in your respective associations such as the Junior Enlisted Association, Second Class Petty Officer Association or FCPOA. The teamwork and camaraderie you'll develop will pay dividends for both you and those you lead." Something you might not know about him is that his craving for a mint chocolate chip shake during our recent port visit to Bahrain started a chain of events resulting in his liberty party meeting two Medal of Honor recipients and actor Steven Lang.

Operations Specialist 2nd Class Bryan Sandoval joined the Navy nearly four years ago. Sandoval offers these words of wisdom. "Stay positive, take on extra responsibilities whenever you have the chance and set your goals high. People notice your hard work even when you think they don't."

One thing that you might not know about him is that he is very shy, quiet and reserved. His proudest Navy moment was re-enlisting for six more years. "It made my family proud to watch my re-enlistment and that's a feeling I will never forget," said Sandoval.

Sandoval's future looks bright. "I want to make E-6 and work on my degree," he said. "I want to go Limited Duty Officer, but I would prefer to make chief first. I am currently taking college courses and studying for my advancement exam. Just taking it one step at a time."



Other events of interest...

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CPRI staff members pose with Gen. James Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Micheal P. Barrett and Medal of Honor recipient Dakota Meyer. (Photo by MC3 Robert Sanchez)



Gen. James Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Medal of Honor recipient Dakota Meyer visit Boxer. (Photo by MC3 Robert Sanchez)

PHIBRON Celebrity Look-a-likes



LT Jessica
Ferraro



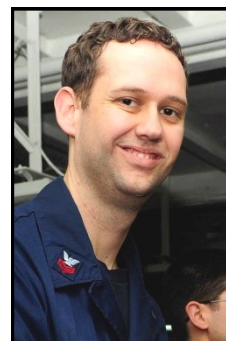
Lea Michele



CAPT Keith
Moore



Taye Diggs



IS1 Schuyler
Wilson



Judge Reinhold

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Photos by MC3 Robert Sanchez

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